

**SECTION:** PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

**SUBJECT:** Treatment of Individuals

**ITEM:** *Racial/Ethnic Categories*



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<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of this policy is to comply with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) directive advising revisions to the Statistical Policy Directive, Race and Ethnic Standards for Federal Statistics and Administrative Reporting. New standards were developed by OMB in order to monitor enforcement of civil rights laws for populations that historically experienced discrimination because of their race or ethnicity.
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<b>Policy</b>	Local agencies shall document at initial certification, the racial and ethnic categories of all applicants/participants in accordance with the following definitions and instructions.
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<b>Basis for policy</b>	OMB Directive No. 15, dated October 1997
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<b>Racial and ethnic categories</b>	The designation of applicants/participants by race, color, or national origin for the collection and reporting of racial and ethnic data is as follows:
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Ethnic categories are: (select one)

- Hispanic or Latino: A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. The term, "Spanish origin," can be used in addition to "Hispanic or Latino."
- Not Hispanic or Latino

Racial categories are: (select one or more)

- American Indian or Alaska Native: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America, (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment (includes Aleuts and Eskimos).
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**Racial and ethnic categories  
(Continued)**

- Asian: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- Black or African American: A person having origins in the black racial groups of Africa. Terms such as “Haitian” or “Negro” can be used in addition to “Black or African American.”
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- White: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

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**Racial and ethnic category identification**

Self-identification by the participant at the time of certification is the preferred method of obtaining data. Participants must be asked to self-identify their racial and ethnic categories, but only after it has been explained and they understand that the collection of this information is to produce data on characteristics of populations served, and to monitor compliance with Federal civil rights laws. Participants should also be informed that his data collection has no effect on the determination of their eligibility to participate in the WIC Program.

OMB requires that when the participant does not provide racial and ethnic information, the staff shall obtain the information through observation and record it as observed. If a participant chooses not to self-identify her/his racial and/or ethnic group, visual identification by a program staff member must be used to determine the participant’s racial and ethnic categories. Selection of one race is acceptable when local agency staff performs visual identification.

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**Documentation**

The race and ethnicity questions must both be answered and documented in ISIS when needed.

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